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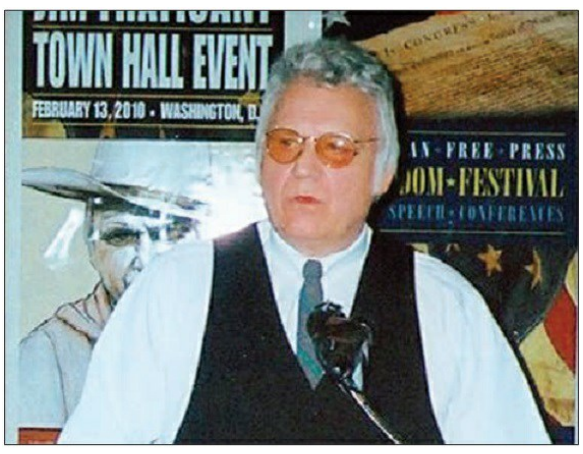
AMERICANFREEPRESS.NET * BEHIND THE SCENES



Former Ohio Rep. Jim Traficant estimates that U.S. taxpayers shell out as much as $25 billion per year for what amounts to nothing more than welfare for Israel. Why not give struggling American families that money?

The Secret Issue Behind Debate Over Unemployment Benefits

• OK to stop checks for struggling families, but not Israel?

By Michael Collins Piper

There's a big "secret issue" behind the ongoing fight in Congress over a proposed three-month extension of federal benefits to the unemployed. But don't count on commentators in the mainstream media (or even some voices in the "alternative" media) to talk about it.

Here's the frontline story: On Jan. 7 the Senate voted 60-37 to end debate on a motion to consider the bill to extend those benefits. In other words, the Senate essentially agreed to "stop talking" and now actually vote on the bill itself. But whatever the Senate finally does, the proposed extension still has to go to the House, and there it is expected that the measure will be killed. That will be good news to conservatives and Republicans who don't like government spending—at least in certain areas.

Republicans say they see the need for corresponding budget cuts to offset the proposed extension of benefits but no Republicans will call, for example, for cuts in foreign aid to Israel — which receives (at the very least) $3 billion per year from the United States, or — as former Rep. Jim Traficant (D-Ohio) has estimated — a probable maximum in the range of $25 billion when all direct aid, grants, loans and other side benefits (including military subsidies that are part of the U.S. defense budget) are totaled.

The Republicans — and the Democrats, too — consider the Israel aid boondoggle a virtually non-debatable matter — "off the books" — and an "untouchable" part of the budget. They will never consider slashing this part of federal taxpayer-financed giveaway programs. Years ago, when then- President Bill Clinton and then-House Speaker Newt Gingrich were fighting over a possible government shutdown on the basis of federal spending, the one and only thing they agreed upon was that cutting aid to Israel was absolutely not under consideration. In fact, they said, it was likely that aid to Israel should be increased. That, they said, was in the best interests of America and its people.

In fact, the money given to Israel (with the enthusiastic prodding of the powerful and well-financed Israeli lobby on Capitol Hill) is as much in the realm of "welfare" as the kind of payments that go to unwed mothers with big hair and eight children living in the ghettoes of America's big cities or in the hills of West Virginia.

But neither the Republicans nor the Democrats will ever admit it.

Ironically — or perhaps quite naturally — Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.), who does decry foreign aid giveaways and extravagant military spending that props up American meddling in foreign wars, became a prominent and vocal figure standing in opposition to extending the unemployment benefits. This is in line with his traditional "libertarian" stance in opposition to any form of government spending. So, in one respect, Paul echoed conservatives in Congress and many voices in the tea party, who often can be counted among the most enthusiastic supporters of U.S. aid to Israel.

In the end, if the benefit extension is blocked, which seems likely, even "big spenders" among the Democrats will be quietly delighted, but for different reasons: GOP control of the House, coupled with a tenuous Democratic control of the Senate, will be in play in the 2014 elections as a direct consequence of the fight over those benefits.

Democrats will be seen by many voters to be on the side of Americans caught up in a bad economy and the GOP will be perceived as a foe of helping those folks.

When the benefits program expired in 2013, 1.3 million people were directly affected — and those numbers don't include spouses, children and other dependents. That could add up to a lot of voters who could tip the balance in key elections.

But don't ever count on the Democrats to say it's time to cut aid to Israel to help bring benefits to Americans at home. That's a "non-issue" — or so they say. Perhaps it's time for some American politicians to say otherwise.

Michael Collins Piper is the author of ***Final Judgment***, the controversial "underground bestseller" documenting the collaboration of Israeli intelligence in the assassination of John F. Kennedy. He is also the author of ***The New Babylon***, ***The High Priests of War***, ***The New Jerusalem: Zionist Power in America*** , ***The Judas Goats: The Enemy Within***, ***Dirty Secrets: Crime, Conspiracy & Cover-Up in the 20th Century***, ***The GOLEM: Israel's Hell Bomb***, and ***Target: Traficant.*** These works can be found at America First Books and First Amendment Books: 1-888-699-NEWS. He has lectured on suppressed topics in places as diverse as Malaysia, Japan, Canada, Russia and Abu Dhabi.

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